GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR OCTAVIAN

THE FIRST AUGUSTUS OF ROME

Written by LLA



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CHAPTER I
A NORMAL CHILD: EARLY LIFE OF OCTAVIUS (63 BC-50 BC)

Born to the niece of Gaius Julius Caesar (daughter of his sister Julia Minor) Atia, the family situation of the young Gaius Octavius was not easy during his childhood, due to the mismanagement of his father's estate (he died when Gaius was four years old) by some tutors, and the support of his mother alone.

Atia is described as a shrewd, politically skilled and determined woman, ambitious for her son, whom she subjected to a continuous education and strict discipline[1.1].

(**Adversity Capacity: Discipline-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge**)

After his mother remarried with Lucius Marcius Philippus the little Octavius was not entrusted to the care of his stepfather, but to that of his grandmother, the prestigious Julia Minor, who started him on advanced formation and study paths, especially in rhetoric and oratory. Certainly Julia wrote to her brother Julius Caesar about Octavius' capacities as a new pride for their *gens*[1.2].

(**Fluid Intelligence: Learning Ability/Cognitive Capacity-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge**)

When he was 12 his grandmother died (51 BC) and since Caesar was in Gaul during his campaigns Octavius was chosen as the male member of the *gens* to deliver the funeral oration (*laudatio funebris*)[2]. The *laudatio* involved the use of various encomiastic topoi towards the deceased and required solid oratory skills since it was delivered in the forum towards the funeral, indicating how Augustus had evidently already reached a remarkable level by that age.

(**Fluid Intelligence: Learning Ability/Cognitive Capacity-Adversity Capacity: Stress Tolerance-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge/Knowledge Application**)

Bibliography:

[1.1] [1.2]Barry Strauss, *Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine*, Simon and Schuster, 2019, p.11

[2]Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II, Chapter VIII

CHAPTER II
THE GRANDSON OF CAESAR: FIRST STEPS TOWARDS POWER (50 BC-44 BC)

Since Julia's death, Caesar's interest in his great-nephew grew more and more. It was natural that he would seek an heir since he had no legitimate male children and for this reason he had looked among his relatives. Despite having older cousins, Octavius stood out in Caesar's eyes: even for his age he was handsome, charming, communicative and intelligent[1]. He was also considered cunning, determined and with an iron will[2].

(**Social Engineering: Charisma/Communication-Fluid Intelligence: Cognitive Capacity-Adversity Capacity: Perseverance**)

When he was sixteen, Caesar paraded Octavius during his triumph for his campaigns in Africa, reserving for him the honors usually assigned for a son.

During these years Octavius met his peer Agrippa, whose talents he immediately grasped and with whom he formed a solid friendship. Agrippa's older brother had fought against Caesar during the civil wars, but Octavius managed to persuade his great-uncle not to prosecute and to free him, and succeeded in it[3.1].

(**Social Engineering: Persuasion-Sensory: Perception**)

In 45 BC Octavius became seriously ill, which worried Caesar himself. Throughout his life, the dictator's heir suffered from poor health and constant illnesses, but he always showed that he was able to resist and hold firm. As soon as he partially recovered, although still convalescent, he armed himself with some companions (including Agrippa) to join his uncle, who was engaged at the front.

(**Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude/Perseverance**)

They arrived in Hispania too late to take part in the fighting, but the journey that took them there was particularly difficult: they suffered a shipwreck against the coast and from there they crossed the Iberian territories through roads infested by enemies. Octavius managed to get his small contingent to the shore unharmed and his stubbornness earned Caesar's admiration[3.2]. After the return in Italy indeed Octavius obtained the promise to become Caesar’s son after his death.

(**Adversity Capacity: Perseverance-Strategy: Logistics-Social Engineering: Leadership/Influence Building-Counteraction: Improvisation**)

Once he returned to Rome, Octavius continued his studies with dedication, focusing on oratory, philosophy (studied under the teachings of Areios of Alexandria and Athenodoros of Tarsus), Latin and Greek literature and rhetoric (under Marcus Epidius and Apollodorus of Pergamon). Although war and civil conflicts interrupted his linear education, Octavius continued to be an avid reader and to practice oratory daily. The same Greek masters that Octavius frequented while he was in Apollonia (during his stay in Epirus while awaiting Caesar) recognized the young man's talent[4].

(**Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge-Fluid Intelligence: Cognitive Capacity**)

Caesar's ambitious plans included a campaign against the Parthians and preparations were being made. In December 45 BC, Octavius was sent to Illyria and Epirus to join the front lines of the army. Caesar's confidence in him was such that he might intended to appoint his great-nephew *magister equitum* with Lepidus. In any case in Epirus Octavius had the opportunity to begin to build valuable relationships with some military commanders[5].

(Social Engineering: Influence Building)

It was during his stay in the region that he was informed about his uncle's murder.

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[1]Jürgen Malitz, *Zur Biographie Octavius bis zum Antritt seines Erbes*, "Gymnasium", 111, Heidelberg 2004, pp. 381-409

[2]Barry Strauss, *Imperatori* (*Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine)*, Roma 2019 (New York 2019), Editori Laterza (Simon and Schuster), p.12

[3.1] [3.2]*Ibi*, p.13

[4]Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus*, frag 37-130

[5]Barry Strauss, *Imperatori* (*Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine)*, Roma 2019 (New York 2019), Editori Laterza (Simon and Schuster), p.14

CHAPTER III
THE SON OF GOD: IN WAR AGAINST MARK ANTONY AND THE SECOND TRIUMVIRATE (44 BC-42 BC)

Despite the contrary opinion of his mother and stepfather Octavius (whom I will refer to from now on as Caesar or Octavian) decided to accept his great-uncle's (now his adoptive father) inheritance and took the name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian. In addition to the name and political legacy of his father, Octavian also acquired two thirds of his enormous estate.

While still in Epirus he had thought of launching a first attack on some garrisons stationed in the region, but he put a stop to this rash decision. He also refused the advice of some soldiers to take refuge in Macedonia because of the danger of assassination against him[1], realizing that only timely action would avoid his exclusion from the division of power in Rome.

(**Adversity Capacity: Impulse Management-Reasoning: Deductive**)

Quickly returning to Rome, Octavian found himself in a difficult situation as the city was teeming with enemies: power was now mainly in the hands of Mark Antony, who looked down on him and considered him a usurper of his position as Caesar's heir, and his father's assassins were still at large and were reorganizing their forces.

From this moment on, one of the cornerstones of Octavian's strategy was to use Caesar's name to attract as many veterans as possible. To pay them, he also appropriated public funds, but subsequent senatorial investigations into the matter deemed him not punishable for this, since part of the troops were used against Antony, at the time an enemy of the Senate. Given his already weak and unstable political situation, supported only by the prestige of his name, it is unlikely that Octavian would have moved in this direction without first foreseeing, also through his subsequent moves, the antagonism of Antony himself among a considerable part of the Senate. In 44 he also appropriated without permission some eastern tributes, a crime for which he will not suffer consequences in the future.

(**Strategy: Foresight-Foresight: Accuracy-Deception: Concealment-Planning: Coverage-Field Crafting: Risk Calculations**)

At the end of the year (November) he appeared in the forum where, after having given further proof of his oratory skills with a speech, he publicly demanded that he be granted the glory that had been his father's, with the acclamation of the crowd[2]. During the same period he began to organize games and spectacles for the people and in honor of Caesar, thus increasing his popularity among the citizens.[3]

(**Social Engineering: Charisma/Communication/Influence Building-Manipulation: Mass**)

In addition to his name, Caesar had no qualms about obtaining some troops loyal to Antony in South Italy through corruption, promising that he would guarantee them higher wages and less discipline.[4] On this occasion, knowing that Atia was not agreeing to move against Antony, Octavian lied to his own mother about his intentions.

(**Social Engineering: Persuasion/Influence Building-Deception: Sophistry**)

In any case, young Caesar's position was still weak and for this reason he tied himself to the only figure available at the time: Cicero, the greatest statesman alive. Cicero had formally supported his father after the death of Pompey, but in reality he had applauded his death and sided with the Caesaricides. He was the head of the conservative party within the Senate and on a collision course with Mark Antony, whom he considered a threat for the Republic. An alliance with the young Caesar would have allowed him to obtain legitimacy from a part of the *populares* party and although he was aware that Octavian was gifted and ambitious, his young age made him appear malleable or at least less dangerous compared to Antony. At the same time, the son of Caesar was the main architect of the deception into which Cicero fell, acting in a meek manner and showing ambition, but above all loyalty to the Republic. In a missive directed to the senator Actium, Cicero described Octavian could have even been "well disposed towards our heroes" (the Caesar-killers)[5].

(**Strategy: Adaptability-Deception: Acting Skills/Misrediction/Sophistry**)

At this point the war with Antony seemed inevitable and thanks to the troops he had recruited Caesar clashed with his armies on at least two occasions in the first months of 43 BC in Northern Italy (Battle of Forum Gallorum and Battle of Modena). During these battles, of which I will explain better later, he gave proof of great courage, personally participating in the clashes and heroically carrying Rome's eagle when he saw that the soldier in charge had been wounded.[6] His displays of ardour made him even more appreciated by the armies loyal to his father.

(**Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude/Stress Management-Social Engineering: Leadership**)

We also know that in these months he attempted to assassinate Antony through some hitmen, but the attempt failed[7].

The *causus belli* had been Antony's desire to appropriate the province of Cisalpine Gaul despite it having been assigned to one of Caesar's assassins. The Senate had ordered that the fighting in the region cease, but Antony had disobeyed its orders. Octavian then, also thanks to Cicero's influence, was chosen as the sword of the senatorial will, and to this end, knowing that the Senate could not count directly on any army at the time, he had amassed a personal army.

(**Strategy: Foresight/Building-Foresight: Accuracy-Planning: Process**)

In January 43 BC, thanks again to Cicero's support, he was appointed senator despite his very young age. At the same time, his military command over the troops he had recruited was legalized, as he had foreseen.

Octavian was then sent by the Senate to confront Antony, whose forces were besieging Mutina (Modena). Octavian's position in command of the army, however, was subordinate to the two consuls elected that year: Hirtius and Pansa. In addition to the three of them, there was also the Caesar-killer Decimus Brutus, theoretically the legal governor of the province of Cisalpine Gaul. Octavian's actions during this military campaign appear to us particularly Machiavellian and ruthless. Despite having quickly obtained an official military role and the senatorial office, he was aware that the main credit for the victory would had go to the consuls and he would have remained a mere prestigious pawn in the hands of Cicero, without being able to directly confront

Antony as a true rival to Caesar's political legacy. Octavian was ambitious and wanted to regain Caesar's political power immediately; he had no intention of embarking on a long and gradual political career.

(**Reasoning: Abductive-Thinking: Linear/Critical/Convergent-Emotional Intelligence: Engagement-Planning: Aim**)

The joint army of the two consuls and Caesar arrived separately in the north of the peninsula and Antony soon realized that he would be surrounded by the enemy if he did not act quickly. For this reason he decided to attack first the army of Pansa, who was late in the march (Octavian and Hirtius were waiting for him). Antony's attack was victorious and in the armed clash Pansa himself was wounded, although not mortally[8]. However, it was also more difficult than expected since some support contingents had arrived without Antony's knowledge. While he was reversing to put Mutina back under siege Hirtius fell on him with fresh troops, defeating him and forcing him to retreat and turning his victory into a great loss. On this occasion Octavian limited himself to remaining on guard at the camp, but the wound inflicted on Pansa would be useful to him later.

After hearing of the victory at Forum Gallorum, Cicero delivered his fourteenth Philippics in the Senate, launching harsh attacks on Antony, but above all praising the work of Hirtius and Pansa. As Octavian had foreseen, little praise came his way, demonstrating that for Cicero his growth had to be put limited.

(**Foresight: Accuracy**)

After the defeat, Antony withdrew his forces to Muntia and redesigned his strategy on the defensive, aware that a pitched battle would be difficult for his tired troops. Octavian and Hirtius, however, left him no chance: their ever-increasing approach forced Antony to leave the field to repel them. The battle that followed was bloody and saw Antony interested in containing the enemy's attacks as much as possible. At one point Hirtius personally charged against Antony's camp, in a maneuver that initially seemed to be successful. In the middle of the clash, however, Hirtius was pierced and his legion seemed to momentarily disband, until Octavian took over the leadership with vigor, fighting on the front lines to recover the body of the fallen consul (the episode of the eagle previously narrated referred to these moments). Antony, outnumbered by the enemy and whose troops were already tired, was forced to abandon the battle and the region itself, leaving Octavian the sole victor on the field. On this occasion the young man proved that although he could not be called a skilled commander, he had both the mettle and the ability to lead an army. After the victory, Octavian also made his hostility towards Decimius Brutus known, sending the Caesar assassin fleeing towards the East.

In the following years, Augustan propaganda was committed to portraying the Octavian of Muntia as a hero of the Republic, ready to risk his own life to bring back the body of the fallen consul. Decades after the death of the *Princeps*, however, Roman historiography began to revise the events surrounding the battle: Caesar would have actually stabbed Hirtius himself in the midst of the battle[9] (we know that he was probably also in the offensive against Antony's camp),

just as two days later he would have poisoned Pansa's wound[10], leading to his death and causing the accusations to fall on his doctor after an investigation.

By the death of Hirtius and Pansa Octavian was not only presented as the only victor over Antony, but it made him the leading figure of the party, enabling him now to gain sufficient strength to deal with Antony as an equal.

(**Planning: Intricacies/Coverage-Strategy: Building-Tactics: Timing/Concentration of force-Deception: Concealment/Fabrication/Sophistry/Acting Skills-Manipulation: Mass/Direct/Logical-Social Engineering: Influence Building**)

Obtaining this status was enough for Octavian to consider his alliance with Cicero and the conservative factions of the Senate obsolete. Their influence had allowed him to position himself as a defender of the nation, but their attachment to the republican institutions would not have allowed him to carry out his plan of domination over Rome[11.1]. It was for this reason that he disobeyed orders to pursue Antony and his army, who had fled to Gaul and was busy raising new legions in the province. Antony was a better ally for the time being, so Caesar's strategy changed[11.2] and he began negotiations to ally himself with him, who in the meantime had re-established relations with Marcus Lepidus, another high-ranking figure of the *populares*.

(**Strategy: Adaptability-Adaptability: Strategic/Enviromental-Deception: Misrediction**)

In the meantime he sent a centurion to Rome to obtain from the Senate the office of consul, which could not be acquired before the age of forty. The senators, frightened, initially accepted, but then took his mother Atia and his sister Octavia as hostages, threatening them. However, the two women managed to escape thanks to the help of the Vestals and Octavian at that point marched on Rome himself, forcing the Senate to surrender and obtaining the consulship through extortion. At this point Cicero's scheme over the young man could be said to be completely broken. Shortly thereafter, Atia died and Caesar forced the Senate to give her a public funeral, the first ever held for a woman in Rome.

Having become master of the city, he called Antony and Lepidus to sign a peace. In the meantime, he made clear his will to open a war against the Caesaricides: the amnesty for them issued by the Senate in 44 BC was cancelled and instead proscription lists were drawn up to persecute both the Caesaricides and their allies. Over 2,000 members of the Roman ruling class were condemned to death (300 were killed, the rest managed to escape), their assets expropriated and integrated into the resources of the new alliance. The bloodthirsty face of Octavian in these months will then be skillfully hidden by subsequent propaganda, and indeed, he will paint Lepidus and Antony as the main continuators of the idea.

(**Psychological Warfare: Demoralization/Emotional Inducement-Manipulation: Mass-Deception: Sophistry/Concealment**)

For example after foiling an assassination attempt on his life, Octavian tracked down the culprit, the praetor Quintus Gallius, had him captured, and personally gouged out his eyes, then had him tortured like a slave[12]. From Augustus's own autobiography, we know that the crime was officially covered up by reconstructing the facts: Gallius was simply driven from Rome, killed outside by bandits, and dispersed.

(**Deception: Concealment-Reasoning: Abductive-Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude-Counteraction: Trap Evasion**)

Among the victims there was also Cicero, wanted dead by Antony. Octavian agreed to his death, abandoning his former protector. He also worked in order to have his father deified, so much so that in January of 42 BC the cult of the divine Gaius Julius Caesar was made official and Octavian was able to name himself "son of God".

(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements**)

Lepidus, Octavian and Antony united to form the second triumvirate, an effective public coup d'état (the first, signed by Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, was a secret agreement) justified by the need to destroy the Caesarians and avenge the death of the Dictator. After having crushed the conservative resistance and expelled its members, the triumvirs set about reshaping the Senate. Furthermore, very high bounties were placed on the heads of the Caesars' assassins.

SUMMARY: THE FALL OF CICERO

As we have seen, the relationship between Octavian and Cicero began the day after Caesar's death. Octavian was then simply the prestigious son of the deceased dictator, but had no real power (he was building his own personal army at that time) while Cicero was the leader of the conservative party of the senate, former consul and the most influential politician of the republic together with Antony. The superiority of his position, the young age of the counterpart and the gentle ways of Octavian persuaded Cicero that he could be a tool to obtain legitimacy and consensus from parts of Caesar's units, ensuring military protection to the senate against Antony. Cicero was aware that it was a gamble, but an alliance with Antony was impossible and Caesar's assassinations were not a valid option due to their unstable situation. Octavian, however, never saw the alliance with the *optimates* as anything other than a way to acquire power, and the murders of the consuls confirm that his plan included from the beginning an alliance with Antony in case he failed to kill him. Having obtained the necessary military strength, Octavian forced Cicero and his faction to submit, ignoring the death of his supposed mentor. With this move he showed that he had already outsmarted the elderly orator in political cunning. As ruthless as he proved to be with Cicero, it must be remembered that the latter had no real intention of strongly promoting Octavian's career, but rather of using him for his own plan to save the republic and the young man, having understood this, never fell for his flattery. In the last meeting between the two, which took place shortly after Octavian's march on Rome, the orator was forced to ask the young man to accept the consulate with him as a colleague, but by now Caesar's son was answering him with irony[13].

(**Manipulation: Logical/Direct-Planning: Coverage/Process/Intricacies-Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Reasoning: Abductive-Foresight: Depth/Accuracy-Adaptability: Enviromental-Strategy: Building/Foresight/Complexity-Others points already mentioned before**)

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[5]Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II, Chapter IX

[6]Cicero, *Letters to Atio*, XV, 12

[7]Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II, Chapter X

[8]Luciano Canfora, *La Prima Marcia su Roma*, Bari 2007, Editori Laterza, pp. 53-55

[9]Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars*, Book II, Chapter XI

[10]Tacitus, *Annales*, Book I, Chapter X

[11.1] [11.2]Barry Strauss, *Imperatori* (*Ten Caesars: Roman Emperors from Augustus to Constantine)*, Roma 2019 (New York 2019), Editori Laterza (Simon and Schuster), p.18

[12]Giusto Traina, *La Prima Guerra Mondiale della Storia*, Roma 2023, Editori Laterza, p.66

[13]Arnaldo Marcone, *Augusto*, Salerno 2015, Salerno Editrice, p.38

CHAPTER IV
CAESAR'S AVENGER: THE VICTORY OF PHILIPPI AND THE PARTITION OF ROME (42 BC-36 BC)

It was decided that Lepidus would remain to guard Rome while Octavian and Antony directly confronted Brutus and Cassius, the two leaders of the Caesar-killing faction that had taken control of the eastern territories of the Republic. The events at Philippi, the culmination of this civil war, were undoubtedly the lowest point of Octavian's career. From the moment of his departure, he was struck by a serious illness, which also delayed his arrival in Macedonia, where the battle was to be fought. Philippi demonstrated that the new Caesar was certainly not a thoroughbred general: his camp was attacked by surprise by Brutus' army, although he was not found inside, having managed to escape in time. Even during the battle, he had succumbed to illness, and this is primarily to blame for his inability to stem the Caesar-killing offensive. Thanks to Antony, however, the two battles of Philippi were ultimately won by the triumvirs, and Octavian nevertheless obtained the honors of victory.

He was certainly more brilliant in sending a signal of dominance to the few survivors of Philippi: while Antony had Brutus's lifeless body dressed and arranged as a sign of respect, Octavian then cut off his head and sent it to Rome, where he ordered it displayed before Caesar's statue. This clear message must have impressed the Roman citizens and terrified the enemies of the triumvir: in the last bloody decades of civil war, no one had ever dared to inflict such humiliation on a former Roman senator.

(**Psychological Warfare: Demoralization/Emotional Inducement-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation**)

After the victory at Philippi, the triumvirate divided the Republic's territory into three zones, each of which was entrusted to a triumvir. Octavian chose to take Italy and Iberia for himself, the regions of operation of Sextus Pompeius. He was the youngest son (the only survivor) of Gnaeus Pompeius the Great, and he had survived Caesar's wars in Iberia (46-45 BC), managing to carve out a remarkable slice of power after the Ides of March, taking advantage of Rome's political instability. His strength lay primarily at sea: his fleet, composed, among others, of pirates his own father had fought, was the most powerful in the Mediterranean and had several legions under his control, with which he had taken control of Sicily. Octavian was aware that taming Sextus was necessary and useful for several reasons: it would further strengthen his role as Caesar's successor as it would end the civil war launched by his father against the Pompeian *gens,* it would guarantee absolute control of the Italian macro-region (essential for the stability of his dominion over Rome), it would have allowed his naval superiority and it would be an opportunity to unbalance the ties of power that linked him to Antony in the future, as we will see.

(**Planning: Aim-Strategy: Building-Foresight: Depth**)

Before he could focus on Sextus Pompeius, Caesar was forced to address two other conflicts, one a product of the other.

The first was the redistribution of lands promised to war veterans after the Battle of Philippi: approximately 170,000 men demanded as compensation sufficient land to cultivate their own crops, a classic reward for the conclusion of a legionary's career, but never managed on such a scale. Octavian arranged for a series of plots of land in central and northern Italy, but lacking sufficient terreins, he had to resort to a series of expropriations from local inhabitants, which created discontent (well narrated by Virgil in the *Georgiche*). Furthermore, he clearly favored his own veterans over those of Antony.

At the same time, he had just ended his first marriage with Claudia, Antony's stepdaughter (daughter from the first marriage of his influential wife, Fulvia), declaring that it had never been consummated, publicly humiliating Fulvia and, indirectly, Antony's family. Fulvia then, taking advantage of the fact that the distribution of land to the soldiers had been unequal, together with Lucius Antony (brother of the triumvir) caused a military riot to break out in central Italy. Antony's role in this drama was wisely neutral, just as Octavian preferred to limit the conflict to his colleague's relatives: both were still in too unstable situations and needed the other's formal support. For Octavian, this brief civil war served primarily to impose tight control over Italy, on which he could always count, and also to eliminate Fulvia, a woman overly ambitious and hostile towards him, from the political arena.

In addition to a disgruntled army, Lucius Antony leveraged some anti-Octavian senators, convincing them to legalize his operation. The son of God crushed the revolt without too many problems yet: not to mention that many of the armies present in Italy had not revolted because they were loyal to him, he cut off payments to the rest of the legions and gradually surrounded Lucius and Fulvia's positions, forcing them to retreat to Perugia.

(**Strategy: Castling**)

Throughout the winter of 41–40 BC, Perugia resisted, but at its conclusion, Fulvia and Lucius Antony were forced to surrender due to starvation. To avoid worsening relations with Antony, whose fleet he needed to fight Sextus Pompeius, Octavian spared both, although he ordered Fulvia sent into exile in Sycyon (Lucius, evidently less dangerous, was assigned to a governorship in Iberia). The same clemency was not granted to the city of Perugia, which had supported the rebellion, nor to the senators and equestrians who had taken refuge there. On the anniversary of the Ides of March, Caesar ordered the killing of 300 aristocrats (including senators and equestrians), ravaged Perugia, and exterminated the city's nobility. Besides sending a warning to his enemies, the sack of Perugia would also serve to calm the army's discontent, keeping his popularity high among them. To anyone who begged him for clemency, Caesar would have replied: "You must die"[1].

(**Psychological Warfare: Emotional Inducement/Demoralization/Reinforcements**)

In the aftermath of Perugia, the political situation was still extremely tense: in recent months, Antony had begun his relationship with queen Cleopatra and had established even closer ties with the East, but above all, he had established contact with Sextus Pompeius with the intention of marginalizing Octavian. The two reached an agreement by which, in the event of war, they would take sides. Octavian, who was aware of Antony's movements, was undaunted, even when

five of his colleague's legions landed in Southern Italy. He knew that an alliance with Pompey and a new war would be of no real benefit to Antony, both because Sextus was a self-appointed republican and his faction, which gathered the survivors of Philippi and the Pompeians, was completely opposed to Antony's support base (the old-Caesarians), and because Antony had no chance of starting a war against him: on the eastern border, in the area under his control, the threat of the Parthians was too insidious, and he was preparing a campaign against them[2]. Seeing the stalemate created (even the armies of the two triumvirs expressed their disagreement regarding a new war), Antony's bluffing was withdrawn, the entourages of the two leaders made peace and he retreated towards Syria.

(**Reasoning: Deductive-Thinking: Critical/Analytic-Adversity Capacity: Impulse Management/Stress Tolerance-Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Field Crafting: Risk Calculations**)

The reconciliation between the two triumvirs also allowed them to marginalize Lepidus, who was definitively relegated to a secondary role. To seal their ties, since Fulvia had recently died, Antony married Octavia, Octavian's sister (despite, as mentioned, being already in a relationship with Cleopatra). Octavian, who had recognized Sextus Pompeius's rule over Sicily for the moment (caused by the grain blockade imposed by Sextus Pompey over Rome, which led to popular revolts and discontent), also forced himself into a political marriage with Scribonia, Sextus's niece. However, the relationship with the woman was short-lived, because in 39 BC he already met Livia. Although both the women were married (Livia was also pregnant, as was Strebonia), Octavian and Livia immediately bonded and as soon as his wife gave birth (she will give the only child of Caesar, the daughter Julia) he divorced Scribonia, forced the breakup of Livia's marriage and married her, when she was also still 6 months pregnant. The break with Strebonia was the prelude to the reopening of hostilities with Sextus. The reopening was also caused by the breaking of the peace treaties by the leader of the pirates, who realized that they had been established by the triumvirs to cage him.

During this period, Octavian discovered that one of his associates, Salvidienus Rufus, had attempted to change his master and was about to ally himself with Antony. For this reason, he had him arrested, convicted of high treason, and forced him to commit suicide[3].

(**Field Crafting: Info Gathering-Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Deception: Fabrication**)

Octavian's naval forces were initially unfortunate: they were twice overwhelmed by storms[4], and on the few occasions they did engage in battle, either Octavian or his admirals were defeated by the young Pompey on the sea. Given the enemy's naval strength, Octavian asked Antony to send him a fleet, in exchange for which he would then send twenty thousand men to his colleague's Parthian campaigns. This lie would later become a hoped-for source of tension in the years to come.

(**Deception: Acting Skills/Bluffing-Strategy: Building/Foresight-Planning: Formulation/Process-Field Crafting: Setting Traps-Foresight: Depth-Manipulation: Direct**)

The second key factor in the victory was Agrippa, returned from the campaigns Octavian had entrusted to him in Gaul and Germany to quell revolts and pacify the regions. Agrippa was given

command of a large naval force that now included 140 vessels donated by Antony. Lepidus also sent a strong contingent to aid Octavian, and so Agrippa started his operations against Sextus in the late summer of 36 BC, meeting him at Naulochus. Although the two opposing fleets were roughly equal in number (300 ships each), Agrippa clearly won the battle, destroying the taxalocracy that Sextus had built over the years. He then fled to Iberia, where he was later captured and killed.

Immediately after the battle, Lepidus, thanks to the presence of his legions on the territory, claimed dominion over Sicily and threatened Octavian to abandon the island. However, the young Caesar had foreseen his colleague's sabotage attempt, having already bribed his legions, who refused to obey Lepidus and defected to his side, thereby neutralizing the already unstable political influence of the third triumvir[4]. With the death of Sextus Pompeius and the confinement of Lepidus, Octavian could consider himself the undisputed master of the western part of the Republic.

(**Foresight: Accuracy-Strategy: Foresight/Castling-Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Social Engineering: Persuasion/Influence Building-Reasoning: Abductive**)

To increase his consensus in Italy (which had declined following the events of Perugia and the grain blockade imposed by Sextus Pompey), Octavian deployed his legions outside the peninsula and returned 30,000 slaves who belonged to the pirate fleet to their owners[6], and also ensured the properties of the citizens, definitively resolving the situation caused by the post-Filippi expropriations. Octavian also had his legions acclaim him *Imperator Caesar*.

(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements**)

To re-establish the authority of the Roman state over Sicily, which had so supported Sextus' activities, Octavian did not use velvet gloves: the city of Tauromenion was purged and its citizens exiled, the brigands who remained on the island were persecuted and one of their leaders, a certain Seuloros, was taken in chains to Rome, where he was publicly devoured by wild beasts[7].

(**Psychological Warfare: Demoralization-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation**)

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CHAPTER V
APOLLO AND DIONYSUS: TOWARDS EAST'S WINDS OF WAR (36 BC-32 BC)

With Sextus Pompeius dead and Lepidus excluded from power, it was clear that the game was now between only three protagonists: Octavian in the West and the Antony-Cleopatra couple in the East. However, a very brief *excursus* on this second couple is necessary to at least dispel the myth that Cleopatra, a "black widow", manipulated the naive and foolish Antony into war with Rome. This narrative, which began in the Augustan era, had indeed a very long life. Both Cleopatra and Antony were undoubtedly capable politicians, and their relationship never amounted to appeasement of the Roman towards the queen.

INSIGHT: ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, LOVE AND POLITICS

Antony and Cleopatra had obviously known each other for a long time, at least superficially: the two had perhaps met during the general's first travels in the East (56 BC), and certainly during Cleopatra's long visit to Rome during Caesar's dictatorship, a period during which she likely also met the young Octavius.

As mentioned, Antony was married to Fulvia, an extremely energetic and ambitious woman, but starting in the last year of her life, he had begun a romantic relationship with Cleopatra, following their famous encounter in Cilicia in 41 BC. From that moment on, their relationship had its ups and downs, but remained constant. Beyond the obvious romantic interest that bound them, each was crucial to the other's political ambitions, and it is on this point that it is important to focus. Antony had been placed in command of the Eastern part of the Republic and had been responsible for finally organizing the great Parthian campaign planned by Julius Caesar. However, his forces proved insufficient (also because Octavian broke his word and sent only 2,000 support troops instead of 20,000), and the first part of the conflict ended in a military disaster for Rome. Only the intervention of Cleopatra and Egypt allowed him to strengthen his army, reopen hostilities and occupy Armenia, thus securing a peace still far from the dreams of conquest Caesar had envisioned. Political control in the East therefore also passed into Cleopatra's hands at a time when the Roman provinces were still weakened by countless civil wars.

At the same time, Cleopatra needed to legitimize her indirect rule over Egypt, both religiously and politically: Egyptian culture, in fact, poorly tolerated a woman in command of the country, except if she was the wife or mistress of a king. Caesar and Cleopatra's son had indeed become Pharaoh of Egypt (under the name Ptolemy XV), but he was still a child and his legitimacy was unstable. Her marriage to Antony, however, established her as the wife of the country's protector, a man who strove to appear Roman-Egyptian to gain support in the kingdom and other eastern provinces.

Octavian, of course, would soon exert all his political influence over the relationship between Cleopatra and Antony (and the half failure of the Parthian campaign), especially given the formal marriage that bound the Roman general to his sister Octavia. The propaganda machine of the Son of God will overwhelm the two lovers and their memory, condemning them for centuries, if not millennia, to be seen as destructive and sinful forces.

Before moving directly to the great global conflict that pitted him against the East, Octavian focused on a series of operations to stabilize his area of jurisdiction. He sent several suffect consuls to Africa to quell the few remaining supporters of Sextus Pompeius in the province, which he had completely expropriated from the now fallen Lepidus, and he launched a massive municipalization plan for the major cities while continuing the reconstruction of Carthage[1]. The construction of large-scale public works to demonstrate his power and modernize the Roman urban fabric was also forcefully applied to the city of Rome.

(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements**)

The second front he worked on was strengthening Roman control over the Adriatic: until then, the Romans had occupied the coast of the sea, but the Illyrian presence, both in the form of pirates and the tribes living inland, made the control of the region unsafe. Caesar therefore organized a strategy of land and sea attacks, sending his best admirals (including, of course, Agrippa) between 35 and 33 BC[2]. This campaign, however, was not aimed solely at consolidating the sea, but also at initiating the process of occupying the entire Illyrian region up to the Danube, following the model of subjugation used by his father in Gaul. In this juncture, Octavian (moving personally between Aquileia and Salona) strove to present himself as a forceful figure, quick in his decisions and results, in stark contrast to the slow and fruitless operations conducted by Antony in the East (caused, as we saw, partially by his betrayal).

(**Strategy: Building/Logistics-Manipulation: Mass-Deception: Sophistry/Fabrication-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Abusing Insecurities**)

After subduing the Illyrians, the target became the Pannonians, inhabitants of the region that today corresponds to the vast area between Bosnia, the Croatian hinterland, and Hungary. We know that in his autobiography, which has reached us in fragments, Octavian devoted himself to describing and analyzing the peoples of Pannonia, modeling his account on that of his father's *De Bello Gallicum*.

(**Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge**)

Octavian led his army toward the city of Strabona, a strategic point for controlling several rivers in the region and, above all, because it afforded a convenient position to confront the Dacians. The city's aristocracy attempted to make a deal with him, promising their children as hostages, but the common people resisted and closed the city gates, leaving Octavian with his armies across the river that separated them[3].

(**Strategy: Building-Foresight: Depth**).

Mindful of his father's exploits, Octavian quickly built a large bridge and laid siege to the city, along with Agrippa. After only a month, the city was forced to surrender, although to quell the discontent and revolts, Octavian was forced to spend the winter there.

(**Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge Application-Tactics: Concentration of Force**)

The final stage of Octavian's Balkan campaign was against the Dalmatians, who had committed the crime of supporting other barbarian tribes. Octavian besieged the central stronghold of Promona to eliminate the population's leader, Varso. Due to the negligence of one of his courtiers, the Dalmatians managed to organize a sortie, but Octavian fell upon them with his forces and massacred them, a fate that also befell the inhabitants of Promona. Even his own soldiers were punished: the court that had committed the error was decimated and its two centurions killed. Thanks to this victory he was also able to take possession of the Dalmatian fleet, which would be essential for the battle of Actium.

During the Illyrian campaign Octavian was undoubtedly at the forefront of the fighting, given that he was wounded in the right knee[4].

(**Psychological Warfare: Emotional Inducement-Tactics: Concentration of Force-Thinking: Fast-Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude**)

Meanwhile, Octavian was also busy hurling harsh criticism at Antony, whom he claimed was guilty of countless crimes, including the defeat of the first Parthian campaign and the fact that the second had been victorious only through deception. But what particularly caught the eye of Caesar's senatorial speeches was the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra. Tolerated as long as Antony had been useful to him, their union now symbolized the debauchery the Roman general had embraced, rejecting Italic civilization to become an Oriental, a despotic, and a megalomaniac. Certainly, the Hellenistic ceremonies that Antony had organized upon his return from Armenia in 34 BC and the numerous banquets that had always featured the lovers were presented, if not exaggerated, in this light. Even Antony's so-called donations to Cleopatra and her children were probably of a symbolic nature, and although the affront towards Rome existed, Antony was not really intent on selling his Roman identity entirely, but rather on further strengthening relations with Egypt and using it as a solid centre of power in the East. The power of Octavian's propaganda, also rich in patriotic elements, increasingly penetrated the Roman people, weakening the rival faction within the Senate. The final blow was given by Antony's divorce from Octavia, an affront that Octavian used to underline how much Antony had by now been corrupted by Cleopatra. In order to underline his humility and loyalty to the republic (and instead portray Antony as a dangerous autocrat,a threat for democracy and a traitor to Caesar's ideals), Octavian proclaimed that he would renounce his powers as triumvir if Antony accepted, but Marcus' refusal led to a further decline in his popularity. The disinformation campaign was so strong that it is still partially credited by several historians[5]. Even Roman racial superiority over the Egyptians was emphasized as a propaganda weapon[6].

(**Deception: Sophistry/Misrediction/Bluffing-Strategy: Building-Manipulation: Mass-Field Crafting: Setting Traps-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Facilitation**)

In 32 BC the situation between the two sides had reached a peak of tension, with Octavian's slanderous action having slowly eroded Antony's prestige in Italy, although it had not succeeded in erasing it (Antony himself had moved to counteract this, trying in vain to avoid being branded a public enemy). Apollo (patron deity of Caesar Octavian) and Dionysus (the deity from whom Antony claimed to descend) were ready to shake the world itself.

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CHAPTER VI
ROME'S FINAL HERO: THE WAR OF THE TWO WORLDS AND THE APOGEE OF ACTIUM (32 BC-30 BC)

The rift between Antony and Octavian occurred in 32 BC, following the divorce from Octavia and, above all, Octavian's unmasking of his rival's will, which he read publicly in the Senate[1].
The will had been entrusted by Antony to the Temple of the Vestal Virgins, the most sacred and secure place in all of Rome. Octavian had learned of the document from Plaucus, a former ally of Antony who had recently switched sides, and had violated the sanctity of the Temple of the Vestals by force to obtain the will[2], an extremely risky move because the Vestal Virgins enjoyed immense prestige and were outside ordinary jurisdiction. The will entrusted Rome's eastern conquests to the three children Antony had conceived with Cleopatra, recognized Caesarion as the legitimate son of Julius Caesar, and expressed the wish to be buried in Alexandria in a mausoleum alongside Cleopatra. Some historians have speculated that Antony's will read in the Senate was actually a forgery[3.1]. The fires of wrath among the Italian populace and nobility were fanned by Octavian. The Antonian propaganda that painted Octavian as a false noble and a lecherous man was swept away; the faction loyal to Caesar's former lieutenant in Rome was forced to evacuate. Over three hundred senators (a third of the Senate) set sail for Alexandria to prepare for war[3.2].
(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Manipulation: Mass-Deception: Sophistry/Unpredictability-Field Crafting: Risk Calculations/Info Gathering-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Facilitation/Perception. Possibly Deception: Concealment/Misrediction/Fabrication**)
At the end of 32 BC the Senate officially declared war on Cleopatra's regime and designated Antony as a public enemy of the Republic.
The Eastern forces' plan was to attack Italy, heart of Caesar’s power, directly, both by sea and land. In terms of troops, the two fronts were at similar levels, rarely deployed before in history, with approximately 250,000 men each, more than half a million soldiers mobilized. Antony could count on more allies thanks to his relations with various Eastern rulers; Octavian relied primarily on the military talent of Agrippa, to whom he entrusted command of his fleet, which was superior to Antony's thanks to recent acquisitions in Dalmatia. Aware of Antony and Cleopatra's intention to pass through the Balkans to reach Italy, Octavian marched to meet them at the head of his army, followed by sea by his faithful admiral.
His intention was to block the enemy forces at Actium, avoiding a land battle (where he knew he was at a disadvantage since he did not possess sufficient military skills), instead forcing Antony to engage Agrippa at sea (also because his armies had greater naval experience, given the campaigns against Sextus Pompeius), ordering his friend to cut off the enemy's supply lines. Antony followed the White Rabbit into his lair and headed for Actium with his ships and army, supported by Cleopatra, who was personally with the fleet.

(**Strategy: Building-Field Crafting: Risk Calculations/Setting Traps-Planning: Aim/Formulation-Reasoning: Deductive-Thinking: Analytic/Convergent**)
September 2, 31 BC, the eve of the battle. Octavian delivers his speech to the assembled army. "Our war is against Egyptians, the people of Alexandria, slaves of a woman, not of a man[4]".
The next day, the two armies looked at each other, divided by the Gulf of Arta. Below them, the second largest naval battle in history up to that point after Salamis, with nearly a thousand vessels deployed, raged.
(**Social Engineering: Charisma/Leadership-Deception: Sophistry**)
At Actium, as against Sextus, Octavian gave Agrippa complete tactical freedom, and his admiral achieved a crushing victory thanks to the swiftness of his ships and his skills as admiral. The united Egyptian-Roman fleet was destroyed under the complacent gaze of Octavian and the terror of Antony and Cleopatra, who were personally endangered and forced to flee the battlefield. The feeble remnants of their ships quickly returned to Egypt, where they hoped to organize a rematch, leaving behind the land forces that had been defeated or bribed by Octavian. However, with the disaster of Actium, many Eastern rulers, fearful of the advance of Caesar and his army, abandoned the faction of Antony and Cleopatra, sowing panic in Egypt in view of the ever-nearing arrival of the new master of Rome.
(**Planning: Process-Psychological Warfare: Abusing Insecurities/Emotional Inducement-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation**)
We know that Octavian spread word among the Antonian ranks that he promised them their lives and land rewards in Italy if they surrendered. Those who believed him and laid down their arms were abandoned and then massacred by Agrippa.
(**Deception: Sophistry/Misrediction-Manipulation: Direct/Mass**)
Meanwhile Cleopatra attempted to make contact with him, but it was too late and Octavian responded ambiguously, leaving small loopholes open since he wanted to take Cleopatra alive[5].
Octavian's army finally reached Alexandria, surrounding and besieging it while his generals conquered the rest of the Egyptian kingdom. The two lovers now had only a few friends and allies on their side, who had decided to follow their fate. The siege, however, proved more difficult than expected, and Caesar needed two attacks to break into the city, winning the second only because Antony's fleet and cavalry abandoned him. Faced with the rout of his army and having received false news of Cleopatra's death, Antony committed suicide, putting an end to any kind of resistance from the city. When Octavian saw his corpse, he pretended to cry, just as Caesar had done when he saw Pompey's severed head[6.1]. In reality, Antony's death at his own hands spared him the difficult task of eliminating him directly (and already by 31 BC Octavian applied the *damnatio memoriae* to him). On the same day he had the documents kept by Antony, regarding their relations and especially some questions about Julius Caesar that could be compromising, burned[6.2]. Only the queen was left at this point.
(**Tactics: Concentration of Force-Deception: Acting Skills/Concealment**)
Upon learning of Antony's death, Cleopatra sent Caesarion to Ethiopia and prepared to commit suicide herself. However, Caesar had foreseen her attempt and had sent his legate, Gaius

Proculeius, to prevent her from killing herself. He managed to stop her attempt by placing her under surveillance.

(**Foresight: Accuracy-Field Crafting: Trap Evasion**)

As he entered Alexandria, Octavian was accompanied by his old master Areios. He stood on a platform before the crowd and addressed them in Greek, declaring that he would spare the city for three reasons: out of respect for Alexander the Great, out of affection for his master and out of the wealth and prestige of Alexandria itself. Such a sign of royalty prevented pockets of resistance against him from forming among the city's (and Egypt's) population[7]. He also had Caesarion captured in the meantime, with the false promise that he would spare him and took Cleopatra's other three children to force her to negotiate with him.

(**Strategy: Castling-Social Engineering: Charisma-Deception: Sophistry**)

The meeting between Octavian and Cleopatra is recounted by Plutarch, Livy, and Cassius Dio, who, although they agree on the outcome, disagree on what was said.

Livy claims that Cleopatra stated that she would never parade as Octavian's prisoner in his triumphal conquest of Egypt, to which he enigmatically responded that "no one would threaten her life". Plutarch (perhaps the least reliable of the three sources) tells us of a Cleopatra who attempted to portray herself as the victim of Antony's actions and decisions and who placed all the blame on her former lover. Already in his account of the Battle of Actium, Plutarch had portrayed Cleopatra as distant from Antony, a finding found nowhere else in the sources. Finally, Cassius Dio (the latest source) adds that, in a desperate attempt to save her life and that of her children, Cleopatra attempted to seduce Octavian, who, however, responded coldly and distantly.

Whatever the precise content of the discussion, Octavian promised Cleopatra that her life would be spared, but he did not reveal anything about the future of the monarchy in Egypt and his triumphs, psychologically consuming her.

(**Adversity Capacity: Impulse Management-Social Engineering: Communication-Planning: Coverage/Aim-Deception: Sophistry-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation/Realization**)

Through a certain Donatella, Cleopatra learned that Caesar's real plan was to parade her through the streets of Rome as his prisoner, sealing the end of the civil wars and Rome's final victory over the hellenistic East. Cleopatra, despite Octavian having placed a freedman to guard her, managed to commit suicide, depriving him of the satisfaction and propaganda’s impact of using her as a trophy. Although disgusted by the queen's action, the young Caesar agreed to have her last wishes respected and had her buried alongside Antony in their mausoleum. A few days later, he had both Caesarion and Antony's eldest son killed, while taking the couple's and Antony's other children with her to raise them as citizens of Rome. With Cleopatra's death, Egypt became a Roman province under the direct control of Octavian (it would become the first imperial province), securing Rome's control of the entire Mediterranean basin and leaving our protagonist as sole ruler of both the West and the East. After fifteen years, his plan to regain completely the role and prestige of Julius Caesar was finally complete.

SUMMARIZE: FIRST STEPS OF THE MASTER OF PROPAGANDA

In the popular imagination, Mark Antony is remembered as a man devoted to the pleasures of life, sensitive to women, and a betrayer of Roman values in exchange for Eastern ones. This image of the character is actually the product of Octavian's (and later Augustus') propaganda machine, which operated with such force and precision that it destroyed the great merits Mark Antony had in life, both as a military commander and as a politician.

The erosion of Mark Antony (and Cleopatra) was the first test to which Caesar's son's propaganda was subjected, which over the course of 45 years of absolute rule over Rome would be refined to the point of becoming one of the most powerful ever employed in History.

Antony started from a better position than Octavian: he was Caesar's best general, having fought alongside him in Gaul and in the civil wars, and assuming a leading role during the years of his dictatorship. Furthermore, he too, albeit distantly, was related to Caesar, a fact he emphasized as much as possible (even in his choice of names for his children, which harked back to the *gens* Julia). Octavian, however, quickly identified the weaknesses from which his slander would begin, highlighting every mistake (real or invented) committed by Antony. The first criticism was that he had too timidly accepted the amnesty granted by the Senate to the Caesar-killers. Octavian was obviously skilled at making people forget that he himself, albeit briefly, had collaborated with a Caesar-killer against Antony (Decimus Brutus, during the war of Modena). Both obviously had not welcomed their choices, but only as a temporary political means to stabilize their own position. But only Antony was tainted by this guilt. During the same period, Antony's actions against the Senate had also been a source of criticism from the young Caesar, the same young Caesar who on several occasions entered the Senate with his soldiers and armed to impose his authority by force (as in the months preceding Actium).

Antony's family, in turn, became a pretext for criticism, with his brother Lucius Antonius and his wife Fulvia having rebelled against Octavian in Perugia. Fulvia was portrayed as a manipulator, a proto-Cleopatra, a whisperer and domineering over her husband, despite there being no evidence that he was in any way subservient to her. Fulvia was the starting point which then allowed Antony to transform into a foolish victim of Cleopatra's lust.

From the end of Sextus Pompeius (when relations began to sour) and the beginning of his relationship with Cleopatra, Antony became an Eastern monarch, a Roman renegade from his true nature. Certainly, there was some truth in the orations that Octavian or those on his behalf spread in Rome about the scandalous banquets and excesses of the court of the Inimitables (as Antony and Cleopatra called themselves). But contrary to what has been said, Antony never truly abandoned his role as Roman legate in the region and maintained solid relations with his allies in Rome. It is undeniable, however, that Antony's choice to increase his popularity and power in the East by uniting with Cleopatra at a certain point crossed a line that Octavian knew how to use as a *coup de grace* to definitively portray him as a traitor. His disavowal of his sister Octavia, whom Octavian had always used as a propaganda tool as an example of the perfect matron (we know he was also deeply attached to her), in favor of a pseudo-official marriage to the queen of

Egypt went beyond even Caesar's experience in the foreign kingdom, the only thing that could legitimize Antony's actions before the Romans. As for Cleopatra, the fact that she was a woman and a foreigner made the young Caesar's job much easier. Cleopatra had never been particularly loved, not even during her relationship with Caesar, but it had long been thought that she could be a tamper-proof ally in the Eastern theater. Antony's alleged donations showed this was not the case and that her ambitions extended far beyond the confines of her kingdom. The theft of the general's will put paid to the couple.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that Octavian was clever in not presenting the war against the two as a new civil war: he had already ended the civil wars with the death of Sextus Pompeius. This was a war against a different world, not against other Romans, but against Cleopatra and her influence in Egypt. Roman culture and identity itself were depicted as in danger in the face of the destructive forces of the Hellenistic, if not even Parthian, East. The idea of not facing a new fratricidal conflict but of defending its own existence and identity allowed Caesar to raise an almost unanimous consensus in the West part of the Republic, both among the population and the middle-high classes. The poets and intellectuals who were his friends and loyal followers (whom we will discuss in more detail later) enthusiastically welcomed this showdown. Even from a religious and philosophical perspective, Octavian had successfully presented himself as a counterbalance to Antony. Antony, in fact, had embraced the Greek philosophy of Epicureanism and devoted himself to the cult of Dionysus, the god of wine, from whom he claimed descent. The young Caesar, on the other hand, had been educated and had mastered the teachings of Stoicism, upon which imperial ideology would later be partially founded, and had devoted himself to the cult of Apollo, the god of reason and the arts.

It's also worth remembering that Octavian's propaganda wasn't the only one moving in this psychological warfare: Antony had his own propaganda concocted, accusing Octavian of various errors, especially emphasizing that he was the son of a nobody and that his marital history was dictated by lust and an ethical incapacity. Nor should it be thought that this propaganda was lacking or inadequate: Antony was a great orator (as demonstrated at Caesar's funeral) and knew how to harangue the people. He simply wasn't on the level of his rival's manipulative genius, who devoured his slanderous machine, marginalizing it from History.

After the fall of Egypt, in order to immortalize the victory at Actium, the now *princeps* founded the city of Nicopolis (literally "city of victory"), expanded the temple of Apollo which was located not far from Actium and monumentalized the site of the battle, making it a memorial to the birth of his dominion.

(**Manipulation: Direct/Mass/Emotional-Planning: Formulation/Process/Coverage -Deception: Sophistry/Misrediction/Concealment/Fabrication-Strategy: Building-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Perception/Facilitation-Thinking: Critical/Associative-Tactics: Creativity-Adaptability: Strategic-Psychological Warfare: Demoralization/Abusing Insecurities/Reinforcements-Reasoning: Abstract**)

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CHAPTER VII
THE BIRTH OF AUGUSTUS: RISE OF THE EMPIRE (30-23 BC)

Before returning to Rome and formalizing his rule over what remained of the Republic, Octavian stopped for a time in Egypt to organize the administration of the new province. Octavian's (later Augustus) administrative reform would be the most important of the first two centuries of the empire's life and was based on the need for Rome's new leader (the Principate was obviously already on his mind) to directly control certain provinces, usually those considered the most dangerous and recently conquered, so as to never be overtaken in power by the Senate. Highly militarized provinces, if placed in the hands of powerful senators, could pose a threat. Rome's territories were divided between imperial provinces (under the direct control of the emperor) and popular provinces (controlled under the old republican system of administration). Octavian also decreed that the taxation of the imperial provinces would not flow into the treasury of the Republic, but into the personal treasury of the prince, making himself (who had already inherited Caesar's enormous wealth) the richest man in the world and one of the richest in history. This wealth, however, was not solely due to personal greed: it was essential for Octavian to continue paying his armies, and above all, paying them out of his own pocket to keep them directly loyal to him. During his long reign, he significantly reduced the number of legions (with the civil wars over, their use was less necessary), granting money or land to hundreds of thousands of his veterans[1]. Maintaining military loyalty remained a continuing priority throughout his long reign.
(**Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving-Reasoning: Abductive/Abstract-Thinking: Associative-Social Engineering: Influence Building/Leadership-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements**)
The first governor of Egypt, a certain Cornelius Gallus, in the following years showed signs of engaging in excessively brilliant military actions and pursuing a policy of personal glorification in the region. For these reasons, Octavian made him commit suicide and placed the appointments of provincial governors under stricter surveillance[2].
From 28 BC to 18 BC, Octavian stayed only for sporadic moments in Rome, spending most of his time on long and tireless journeys throughout Roman territory to oversee the birth of his new Empire. No emperor other than Hadrian traveled so extensively for civil reasons[3].
(**Adversity Capacity: Perseverance**)
Before discussing other events surrounding his life, however, let's focus on the institutionalization of his figure and role. At the time of the victory at Actium, Octavian no longer held the power of a triumvir, but was still consul, endowed with unlimited *imperium* (military legitimacy over all of Roman territories) and special powers granted by the Senate to fight Antony.
The Principate, the political form he created, but only called so by us, derives from the title of *princeps senatus* he took in 28 BC, a position that already existed and was reserved for the

senator who voted first (as is easy to imagine, Octavian's first vote influenced that of the following senators). Combined with the power of *imperium*, the title of *princeps* became the basis of support for Octavian, who envisioned himself as the first of the senators and the supreme leader of the army. From 31 BC to 23 BC, Octavian was always elected consul and his legal inviolability was maintained.

In 27 BC, he pretended to want to return all powers to the Senate, in a display of humility typical of Roman leaders (just as Caesar had refused the crown from Antony), but the Senate refused and instead invested him with the title of Augustus, by which we will henceforth refer to him. The title of Augustus (meaning "worthy of honor and admiration") not only assured the prince moral and political superiority, but also imbued his figure with a sacred and religious character. And Augustus worked extensively on religious policy, as we will see later. He was later also granted the powers of the tribunate of the plebs, directly connecting his power to the Roman people.

(**Social Engineering: All Cats-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements**)

Augustus understood that, however shaped by the civil wars and his imposition of power (the Senate had been almost completely remodeled, the Roman people hailed him as a hero), neither the ruling class nor the populace would accept the formal establishment of a monarchy in Rome. To understand Rome's aversion to this form of government, one must understand the ideology on which the Republic had been founded for nearly five centuries, steeped in deep hatred of the idea of a single man in command, seen as a barbaric or Oriental degeneration, opposed to Rome's "democracy" (actually an oligarchy), the only way to give voice to the entire people of Rome. The Senate, though controlled mostly by aristocrats or the wealthy, was seen as the symbol of freedom and the moral/political superiority of Roman civilization. Augustus gradually succeeded in changing this sentiment, but he always hid his role behind the facade of continuing and protecting the Republic. The Romans knew full well that he was the true head of the state, but he was also the hero who had saved the Republic from the tyrannical pressures of the East. He spoke and acted like a true Roman, addressed the people and the Senate with humility (he knew the names of all the senators and called them by name, he didn't want them to get up in his presence and he spoke to the people when he went down to the forum[4]), and repeatedly proposed relinquishing his powers. His wife and his family were paragons of perfect Romanity, and Augustus had forbidden anyone from calling him *dominus* or flattering him. And, of course, he had been the man who had brought peace and stability within Roman borders after a century of blood. In short, Augustus had achieved perhaps the most impressive mass manipulation in ancient history, convincing a deeply anti-monarchical people to accept a *de facto* monarchical form of government.

(**Manipulation: Indirect/Mass/Logical-Deception: Acting Skills/Bluffing/Sophistry-Social Engineering: All Cats-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Planning: Coverage/Process/Formulation-Reasoning: Abstract-Thinking: Critical/Associative-Adaptability: Environmental-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Perception-Fluid Intelligence: Cognitive Capacity**)

As mentioned, Augustus was also skilled at using religion to legitimize his new political system, and had consistently demonstrated this since he deified Julius Caesar and took the name of Son of God (later, in 29 BC, he built a large temple in the honor of his father). By virtue of this, his name was permitted to be included in the rites and ceremonial prayers associated with the cult of the divine Caesar, and also in those dedicated to the safeguard of the country. Furthermore, as already mentioned, Octavian had closely linked himself to the figure of Apollo to present himself as a counterpoint to the heir of Bacchus/Dionysus, Mark Antony. He should have been a calm, reasonable god, and a lover of beauty and the arts. But it was after his ascension as emperor that Augustus launched a full-fledged religious cult of his own person, founding the cult of the emperor[5]. Obviously, he could not have done so in Italy, where such a choice would have been seen as in stark contrast to the image of the "conqueror of Eastern corruption" that his propaganda had constructed. It was instead in the external provinces, especially in the East and the celtic world (but also in Germany), that the figure of the *princeps* and his family were assimilated with divine traits to bring them closer to the legitimacy that the local populations had known up until that point. When he was still alive there were already thirty-seven temples dedicated to the cult of Augustus in the empire[6.1]. His legitimation strategy was therefore not exclusively tied to Roman tradition, but adapted itself depending on the population and territory he had to control. This is also confirmed by the fact that in Egypt Octavian directly inserted himself as an expression of the traditional Egyptian divine legitimacy to which the Ptolemies had already appealed, calling himself son of Ra, beloved of Isis and Ptah and other religious honorifics typical of the pharaohs[6.2]. Augustus also revived ancient Roman religious traditions, such as the rites of the Arval brothers, which in the early republic and the monarchic era were dedicated to the fertility goddess Dia, but which were modified to celebrate the imperial family[7]. The prince's family itself, in a view to legitimizing the future transfer of power, was at the centre of the imperial cult and the celebrations associated with it, during which portraits of Augustus, Livia and their children/heirs were paraded.

(**Adaptability: Enviromental-Strategy: Adaptability-Social Engineering: All Cats-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Abusing Insecurities-Thinking: Associative/Analytic-Reasoning: Abstract-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge Application**)

With the death of Lepidus (who lived under custody until the end of his days) in 12 BC Augustus also obtained the title of *pontifex maximus*, also becoming the highest priest of the Roman world. Meanwhile, the propaganda machine grew ever larger. We will soon see the construction of the Augustan ideology through a circle of intellectual friends, but the element of its integration into the daily lives of Romans was not to be underestimated. Like a proto-totalitarian government, Augustus understood the need to permeate society with the figure of its sovereign. He exploited every means available at the time to achieve this, and soon it was impossible to cross the street, go out to dinner, pray in a temple, or pay for anything without seeing his face or hearing his name[8]. The custom of always toasting the emperor spread; his busts, bas-reliefs, and announcements were everywhere. His family also became the subject of constant representations

in Rome and in the Empire; temples were dedicated to them, and they appeared on gems and coins, just like the prince.

(**Manipulation: Mass/Logical-Reasoning: Abstract-Thinking: Associative/Critical-Social Engineering: All Cats**)

With Rome fully master of the Mediterranean and Sextus Pompeius now a forgotten corpse, Augustus violently crushed the last remaining pockets of piracy in the imperial seas, causing a significant increase in trade. His financial reform in 23 BC allowed him to gain complete control of the economy not only in the senatorial provinces but also in the imperial ones[9]. He ordered to increase donations in the newly conquered territories, in order to enhance loyalty to Rome and, above all, confidence in the fronts of a future tied to Roman civilization.

(**Social Engineering: Influence Building-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving-Thinking: Convergent-Emotional Intelligence: Realization/Perception**)

The judicial system was also reformed. To better cover all legal cases, even minor ones, Augustus reorganized the administration of justice in the provinces, entrusting it to senior consuls appointed by him[10.1]. In Rome, the role of the urban praetor was strengthened in this regard, and he also fought to reduce bureaucratic delays. Augustus himself also handled cases, often even doing so at night, and demonstrated great judgment in sentencing or granting pardons[10.2].

(**Adversity Capacity: Perseverance-Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving-Crystallized Intelligence: Knowledge Application**)

Between 26 and 25 BC, Augustus took direct command of the Cantabrian War, which his legions had been fighting for three years in northern Spain to secure control of the whole Iberian Peninsula. To crush the resistance of the Astures and Cantabrians, the *princeps* mobilized Roman forces in both Spain and Lusitania and divided the attacking forces into three columns, two of which he then pushed into enemy territory.

The first Iberian stronghold to fall was Vellica, which was occupied by Augustus, who then defeated the enemy army at Bergida, forcing it to retreat to Mount Vindius. At this point, Augustus's pincer strategy became apparent: the second Roman column completed its maneuver and also arrived from the north, trapping the Cantabrians on the Vindius and then crushing them with a joint attack. After this victory, Augustus won the siege of Araquil, but a new illness forced him to temporarily halt his military campaigns, obliging him to delegate the task to his legates, who within a few years would break all Iberian resistance and annex the territory of the Cantabrians and Astures to Rome.

(**Strategy: Castling/Logistics/Building-Planning: Formulation/Process-Tactics: Timing**)

The other military campaigns desired, but not personally directed, by Augustus were numerous, at least until 9 BC. Nicholas of Damascus's assertion that no man had ever expanded Rome's borders so much and incorporated peoples whose names were not even known is not false[11.1].

The prefects of Egypt pushed forward in military operations towards the south, even placing the Ethiopian empire under Roman influence, and Augustus' nephew, Gaius Caesar, placed the Arabian kingdoms on the south-eastern border under his uncle's indirect control[11.2].
Augustus also exerted political pressure on the kingdom of Armenia, and thanks also to Tiberius's military campaigns in the East, by 20 BC he obtained the restitution of the imperial eagles that had been captured during the disaster of Carrhae in 53 BC. Cassius Dio tells us that Augustan propaganda was clever in portraying this success as an easy victory against the Parthians, for which great triumphs were celebrated[12].
(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Manipulation: Mass**)
The empire's expansionist aims also included Britain, already a subject of interest to Caesar, against which three potential invasions were planned between 34 and 26 BC, all of which, however, remained on paper due to the onset of other emergencies[13].
(**Planning Aim**)

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CHAPTER VIII
THE CHAMELEON EMPEROR: FAMILY, WAR AND POLITICS DURING THE PAX AUGUSTEA (23-2 BC)

23 BC was a crucial year for Augustus and his new institutional project, representing a turning point in the stabilization of his power and the political balance.

First, the illness that had struck him during the campaigns in Iberia worsened further, once again leading to the belief that he was close to death.

In this difficult moment, he focused on planning a possible succession, despite being only forty years old. He married his daughter Julia to his eighteen-year-old nephew Claudius Marcellus (son of Octavia and her first husband), also granting him some special privileges for his age (he received the offices of *aedile* and *quaestor* and was admitted to the Senate in a primary position). Moreover, since the age of thirteen, the boy had been drawn to power and public office by the prince, who had even taken him with him on his campaigns in Iberia, similar to what Caesar had wanted to do with the young Octavius himself. The desire to follow Caesar's footsteps in choosing his heir was seen as beneficial in order to legitimize the hereditary nature of Augustus' role.

(**Reasoning: Inductive-Thinking: Convergent**)

The rapid rise of Claudius Marcellus strained the relationship between Augustus and his two main collaborators: Maecenas, the "minister of culture", and Agrippa, who was moved from Rome and sent to the East on military duties.

The prince's health crisis, however, subsided, and he realized that it was now necessary to slow Marcellus's political growth in order to reconcile both with his key collaborators and with the remnants of the old traditional party still surviving in the Senate. In this sense, his resignation from the consulate for the first time in ten years should be viewed. Instead, it was handed over to two former members of the said and now innocuous conservative side, with whom it was better to maintain stable relations. Octavian also sent his seal directly to Agrippa and increased his military power in the East, intending to show that trust in him had never wavered.

At the very end of 23 BC, however, Marcellus died of an epidemic. Augustus was devastated by the loss of his nephew and son-in-law, had him buried in his mausoleum, and personally read his funeral eulogy[1]. Octavian and Octavia's grief was still strong years later: when Virgil read the passage from the *Aeneid* that discusses the heroes of Rome and mentions Marcellus, Octavia fainted, and Augustus had to ask for the reading to be suspended.

(**Emotional Intelligence: Engagement-Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude**)

Julia, however, remained crucial to Augustus's efforts to ensure political stability and, above all, to provide him an heir of blood: in 21 BC, he married her to Agrippa himself, who was thus designated as a possible successor to his friend, definitively resuming his role as the regime's number two. A year later, the couple's first child, Gaius, was born. His daughter, however, soon became a problem for the emperor. Perhaps in some ways she was too much like him: ambitious,

lustful, and strong-willed. For a woman, especially in a traditionalist society like the one Augustus was intentioned to create, those characteristics were intolerable. During her travels with his husband in the East, Julia had herself immortalized in statues portraying her as the goddess Aphrodite, and rumors of her infidelity to Agrippa began to circulate.

Meanwhile, Augustus was also busy reorganizing his own power, having resigned from the consulate, and trying to stem an epidemic that had broken out in Italy (the same one that had killed Marcellus). In 22 BC, he rejected the Senate's proposal to embrace the title of dictator, choosing instead the role of censor, and organized an emergency grain drive to the peninsula to maintain the support of the weakened plebs[2]. The internal situation in the city remained tense, however, even after Augustus' departure for the East in order to control the final part of the campaigns of the son-in-law Tiberius, leaving the rule of Rome to Agrippa.

(**Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Fluid Intelligence: Problem Solving-Strategy: Logistics**)

Since the disease was compounded by popular unrest due to some public elections, the situation worsened further, forcing Augustus to return to Rome early since Agrippa had to leave for Gaul. He finally managed to appease the population and repress the pockets of opposition that had operated in the shadow of the crisis. For his return the Senate organized annual games and erected a great altar[3].

(**Social Engineering: Charisma/Leadership**)

In 22 BC, Augustus also had to foil a republican conspiracy hatched by the son of Marcus Licinius Crassus and the son of Lepidus[4.1]. Although we don't have many details about this episode, we know that the conspiracy was broken up and its members captured, later executed and the affair covered. A few years later, he also foiled a second conspiracy, this time organized by Cinna Magnus, grandson of Pompey the Great[4.2]. Augustus's ability to so easily suppress these assassination attempts and coups was largely due to the inability of his enemies to organize adequately structured opposition groups, given the emperor's popularity and the strategies he employed to prevent the formation of a real opposition (including: the balanced satisfaction of all social classes, the ever-increasing decrease in senatorial influence, the compromises sought even with the ancient republican rivals, the use of secret police and agents, the security he enjoyed as a result of the many offices he held, especially the tribune of the plebs, and the agreement of limited tolerance for ideological disagreement in the intellectual circles, in exchange for loyalty, like in Livius case).

(**Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Field Crafting: Info Gathering-Reasoning: Abstract/Inductive-Strategy: Castling/Adaptability-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements/Abusing Insecurities-Thinking: Associative-Planning: Intricacies-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation-Manipulation: Logical-Deception: Concealment**)

By 18 BC, Augustus's power had returned to full stability among the plebs and had remained stable among the middle class and the army. He then took a possibly risky step to weaken the already wounded senatorial aristocracy. That year, a major purge of the Senate took place,

reducing its membership from 900 to 600, officially requiring a wealth of one million sesterces (approximately 20–30 million euros today) to obtain the office. The strategy was aimed at reducing the number of leading figures in the new regime, thus further centralizing power in the hands of the prince, while still maintaining the veneer of protecting the republic and its values (there were 600 senators in the non-crisis periods of the republic; such a high number had only been reached due to the various civil wars). Despite the angry grumblings of some recently rising nobles, the measure passed without problems, demonstrating how the Senate was now a power largely subordinate to that of the emperor.

(**Strategy: Building-Field Crafting: Risk Calculations-Social Engineering: Influence Building-Manipulation: Mass-Deception: Sophistry**)

After the birth of Lucius, the second son of Julia and Agrippa, in 17 BC, Augustus adopted both children, definitively establishing his succession.

As a definitive sign of the principate's consolidation, that same year Augustus organized the most sumptuous celebration of his reign, dedicated to Rome's newfound peace, reviving the festival of the secular games, typical of the Roman archaic period. The celebrations lasted three days and were of enormous significance both in Rome and throughout the empire, a glorification of the new prosperity and happiness ensured by the emperor. On the third day, Augustus and Agrippa ascended the temple of Jupiter Maximus and Juno Queen to offer sacrifices to the two greatest gods and to Apollo, Octavian's patron deity. On this occasion, a choir of 54 boys and girls recited the secular carmen composed on purpose by the poet Horace, which hailed the return of tradition and normality to Roman social life thanks to the new imperial policies[5].

(**Social Engineering: Communication/Leadership/Charisma-Manipulation: Mass-Psyhological Warfare: Reinforcements**)

During those years, Octavian also oversaw the reorganization of some military matters. In particular, he abolished the rule that only senators could command legions and promoted meritocracy in the army, allowing the middle class to rise to the highest positions among officials. At the same time, he redistributed the number of legions and auxiliary troops present in the various provinces, created smaller local fleets and deployed the main ones to key Mediterranean hubs. He reduced the number of soldiers present in the city of Rome to prevent them from becoming a threat, reinstated troop bonuses and the length of their service, and created a new military postal system to be notified as soon as possible of any developments in the war in the provinces[6]. Augustus was always skilled at balancing the need to satisfy his soldiers with the ability to not overindulge them, for example, he abolished the possibility of them marrying while in service. He later abolished the presence of ordinary soldiers in Rome and created the Praetorian corps, the emperor's personal guards which amounted to 3 cohorts (about 1500 elite men), although their number will tend to grow over time.

(**Fluid Intelligence: Creativity/Problem Solving-Reasoning: Abstract-Thinking: Analytic/Dissociative-Strategy: Logistics-Social Engineering: Leadership**)

Between 17 and 13 BC, Augustus traveled to Gaul and stayed in the region to reorganize it both administratively and militarily, in preparation for a major campaign he was planning towards

Germany. Around the same time, he sent his stepsons Tiberius and Drusus to the Alps with the task of subjugating the people of Noricum, a territory important for its mines, and bringing the region under Roman rule.

(**Strategy: Logistics-Planning: Aim/Formulation**)

With preparations for war underway, he returned to Rome in 13 BC, accompanied by Agrippa, who had meanwhile been administering some eastern provinces. Shortly before arriving in the city, he had obtained the title of Pontifex Maximus after the death of Lepidus, and for this reason too, his return to the city was marked by an overwhelming influx of Roman citizens, the largest ever seen up to that point in Roman history[7].

(**Social Engineering: Charisma**)

12 BC was a difficult year, as Agrippa died suddenly, leaving Augustus grieving the loss not only of his lifelong friend, but also of his best military commander and administrator, a possible heir to his regime.

Meanwhile, the massive military campaign in Germania began, and Drusus, one of Livia's two sons, was placed in command of the operations, achieving a series of successes that pushed Roman forces deep into barbarian territory. Within three years, the conquest of the country was almost complete, but in 9 BC, Drusus fell from his horse and died. Augustus, who had always preferred him to Tiberius, was forced to appoint his second stepson as his temporary heir and married him to Julia. Tiberius again demonstrated his military prowess and within a year completed the conquest of Germania up to the Elbe River, earning public honors from his stepfather and holding positions similar to those Agrippa had once held.

The balance between Tiberius and Augustus, however, was very short-lived: in 6 BC, the stepson went into self-exile on the island of Rhodes in protest against the political rise of his two stepsons Gaius and Lucius, the sons of Agrippa and Julia, whom Augustus intended to make his heirs. In 5 BC, Gaius, then fifteen, was admitted to the Senate, and it was decided that he would be elected consul in 1 BC. In 2 BC, the Senate named Augustus “Father of the Fatherland”, and in the same year, the decades-long work commissioned by Augustus for his new forum, the largest ever seen in the city's history, was completed. It was one of the many projects of monumentalization and modernization of Roman urban planning that the prince had organized. In the forum, a large statue of Augustus was placed on a triumphal chariot, surrounded on one side by Mars (god of war, father of Romulus) and on the other by Venus (goddess of love, mother of Aeneas). It was clear that the divine significance of the lineage of Caesar and Augustus's gens Julia, long vaunted and developed by the new imperial culture (think of Virgil's Aeneid), had reached its pinnacle.

(**Manipulation: Mass-Social Engineering: All Cats**)

In 2 BC, other events of great significance occurred. First, one of Mark Antony's sons, Iullo, committed suicide, although being still young. Julia, meanwhile, was exiled to the small island of Ventotene for the next five years and banished from Rome. The two episodes are linked by a conspiracy, perhaps the largest organized during the reign of Augustus, which included numerous young members of the Roman nobility descended from or close to Mark Antony's former

positions, with the aim of eliminating the emperor[8] or forcing him to modify his succession[4.3]. However, the conspiracy was once again discovered by the emperor (with a large advance it seems), whose response was very harsh. It was certainly he who forced Iullo to commit suicide, and we know that Julia's exile, despite her having always had a difficult relationship with her daughter, was as decisive as it was painful (although some suggest that Augustus even thought to kill her). The relationship between father and daughter completely ended, and Augustus opposed any popular proposal to take Julia back to the imperial family at Rome.

(**Counteraction: Trap Evasion-Reasoning: Deductive-Thinking: Convergent-Adversity Capacity: Impulse Management/Mental Fortitude-Emotional Intelligence: Engagement/Management**)

INSIGHT: THE PRINCE OF THE LETTERS

One of the many areas in which Augustus was extremely active was the promotion and development of cultural activity within his own court, which reflected in Rome itself. His reign is one of, if not the, most significant periods in the history of Latin literature, and takes its name from him (Augustan literature), involving the most important figures in the poetic, historical, and philosophical world of his time. Virgil, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus, Livy, and many others enlivened the emperor's palace under the guidance of one of his most important ministers, Maecenas. Besides the fact that Octavian had always been predisposed to a passion for literature and study (he encouraged the spread of public libraries in the West from the earliest years of his rule), the formation of a high-level intellectual circle close to the imperial power also played a significant role in political legitimacy. The support of intellectuals, almost always enthusiastic and strong (except in the case of Livy, who was nostalgic for the republic but recognized the necessity of the principate), led to the creation of several laudatory works not only for the new political form created, but also for the emperor himself. The most striking example is undoubtedly the Aeneid, the poem celebrating the *gens* Julia and the mythical origins of Rome, but there are many other examples of works conveying political messages (Virgil's Bucolics and Georgics, Horace's writings from before the war with the East, his secular poems, the dedications of Propertius and Ovid to the emperor, etc.). First as Octavian and then as Augustus, he was very skilled at not imposing his ideology on his intellectuals, allowing minor forms of tolerance towards political objections and guaranteeing broad freedoms and autonomy, focusing on spontaneous membership, presenting himself as a patron rather than a master. The development of Maecenas's circle and the imperial authorities' activity in founding libraries and schools later favored the emergence of other intellectual circles parallel to the main one, sometimes even rivaling and sponsored by wealthy Roman patricians.

(**Social Engineering: All Cats-Reasoning: Abstract-Thinking: Dissociative/Associative-Crystallizzed Intelligence: Knowledge-Adaptability: Environmental/Cognitive-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Fluid Intelligence: Creativity**)

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CHAPTER IX
THE OLD MAN ON THE WORLD'S MOUNTAIN: THE SUN SETS FOR THE EMPEROR (1 BC-14 AD)

As the empire grew in wealth, strength, and stability, Augustus's life became more difficult due to the losses and tensions tearing his family apart. In 2 AD, young Lucius, his second grandson, died, and just two years later his older brother Gaius, who Augustus was making his new heir, also died at the age of just twenty-one. He was the seventh heir, whom the emperor was forced to mournfully bury.

(**Adversity Capacity: Mental Fortitude**)

Having lost so many male members of his family, he had no other choice but to reluctantly adopt Tiberius, who finally returned to political life.

Again in 4 BC, another assassination attempt was foiled, this time organized by a descendant of Cinna, Caesar's father-in-law[1].

(**Counteraction: Trap Evasion**)

Surprisingly, the young man was not only spared, but was even rehabilitated and elected consul the following year, thanks to his closeness to the political circles linked to the Empress Livia. We have said little about her, but it is important to remember that Livia was a true right-hand to Augustus, almost as much as Agrippa had been, a woman of extraordinary intelligence, cunning, and charisma, capable of presenting herself as the perfect example of a traditional Roman matron and advising her husband on his political life. She was certainly the most powerful woman in the empire, comparable only to Octavia, and her prestige remained undermined even after Augustus's death.

In 8 BC, another scandal cast a shadow over the imperial family: Augustus's granddaughter (daughter of Julia, and called Julia Minor, like the emperor's grandmother) committed adultery with a consul, and perhaps also with the poet Ovid, and for this reason was sentenced to lifelong exile on the Tremiti Islands. As with his daughter, Augustus showed no mercy for the members (especially the female ones) of his family who distanced themselves from his leadership, even morally. This firmness allowed him to avoid having his consensus damaged by these incidents.

(**Adversity Capacity: Perseverance-Emotional Intelligence: Engagement**)

Before Augustus's death, the exact date is unknown, Julia the Younger and her brother Agrippa Postumus (whom Augustus had always despised because he was considered incompetent) were the targets of a kidnapping attempt by Lucius Audasius and Asinius Epicadius. Their plan was to take them to an external province and start a civil war against the prince by mobilizing the peripheral legions[2]. The attempt was, however, foiled once again by the emperor.

(**Counteraction: Trap Evasion**)

Meanwhile, however, the new province of Germania, first conquered by Drusus and then by Tiberius, was about to be rocked by revolts and major problems. In 9 AD, the provincial governor, Varus, was deceived by the civilized German Arminius and sent three legions to

slaughter in the Teutoburg Forest, in one of Rome's most famous defeats. Although the news caused a wave of concern and dismay throughout the empire, Teutoburg was not the epic defeat portrayed by Germanic historiography, nor did it significantly alter the balance of power between the Romans and the Germans. The empire had approximately 300,000 soldiers at its disposal (and at least twice that number in reserves, with enormous potential for the population to rally), and the loss of 12,000 of them was certainly serious for the moment in Germania, but it was merely a small step in the path of Roman expansion. It is no coincidence that Augustus, who had been furious over the disaster, immediately ordered Tiberius to organize a punitive campaign (which was successful in 11 AD) and began preparations for a new great campaign to reconquer the territory (the Roman troops had retreated beyond the Rhine River), which was to be completed during the first years of Tiberius' reign, but the stepson will abandon the project.

(**Planning: Aim/Formulation**)

In 13 AD, now seventy-five years old, though still in good health, Augustus organised a great triumph to celebrate Tiberius' military successes in Germania and Pannonia, and at the end of it, to demonstrate the newfound peace within the imperial family (or what was left of it), his stepson knelt at his feet in the forum.

(Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Emotional Intelligence: Facilitation/Realization)

The following year, while accompanying Tiberius on a journey to new military campaigns (although he was expected to remain within Italy's borders given his advanced age), Augustus was struck by an illness that took his life within a few days. Present at his bedside were several aides, his wife Livia, and perhaps Tiberius himself. In front of them, Augustus would have displayed great composure and lucidity despite his impending end, with his three famous lines: "I found Rome as a city of stone and I made it a city of marble" (Octavian as a modernizing emperor who brought prosperity to Rome), "Livia, remember our love and live" (Octavian as a husband, a family man), and "Have I played my part well? Then applaud, the play is over" (Octavian as a man who leaves the world in glory).

The final chapter in Octavian's story (at least of his body) is his funeral, meticulously organized by the emperor in the final years of his life. It was presented not only as a celebration of death, but as a triumph first and foremost, and for this reason some elements of triumphal parades were adopted. The long procession that passed through Rome carried portraits and statues of the main heroes of the city's history, starting with Aeneas, passing through Romulus and the protagonists of the Republic (including Pompey). Lastly, the body of Augustus appeared, symbolizing that he was the one who closed the circle of heroes. But not only that, for the prince, the ceremony was intended to be a fusion of the Roman world of the living with that of the dead, immortalizing his figure in the pantheon of civilization's human mythology[3].

(**Social Engineering: Charisma-Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements-Emotional Intelligence: Realization**)

Thanks to his careful preparation, despite the many obstacles caused by deaths or scandals, the succession of monarchical power from Augustus to Tiberius was uncontested and was the final

step that confirmed once and for all that the republic was dead and that in its place a new empire and a new dynasty had been born.

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EXTRA FEATS

To present an addition of the analyses conducted so far, I propose a series of other data, information and deeds on Augustus and his career that have escaped attention during the narration.

FLUID INTELLIGENCE

- ➔ It was implied during the explanations that Octavian spoke Greek in addition to Latin. Although he mastered Greek rhetoric and was capable of delivering orations and speeches in Greek (the most famous being his speech at the entrance to Alexandria), he was never truly fluent in the language, as a consequence of the interruption of his theoretical studies upon Caesar's death. **Learning Ability**
- ➔ Although his writings have survived with less integrity than those of his father, Caesar, Octavian was also a skilled writer. Author of many epistles and orations, his *magnum opus* is the *Res Gestae*, an autobiography praised by Suetonius for its clear and elegant style. A perfectionist by nature, Augustus regularly wrote and rewrote his texts to ensure they were as good as possible. **Cognitive Capacity-Creativity**

CRYSTALLIZED INTELLIGENCE

- ➔ Like Alexander the Great, Octavian had a visceral passion for Homer's works, in particular, he always carried a copy of the Iliad with him wherever he went. He was also an avid reader of Menander and other Greek tragedies. He also had a passion towards music. **Knowledge**
- ➔ The close relations with Maecenas' circle and with Maecenas himself testify that Augustus' cultural level was decidedly high and superior to that of a normal Roman noble scion, given that he could discuss literary and philosophical topics with them. **Knowledge**

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- ➔ Octavian's use of vengeance and clemency demonstrates how much he had learned from the experience of his great-uncle Caesar, who had excessively pardoned his enemies after Pompey's defeat. Octavian was generally firm and ruthless with his enemies, as evidenced by the numerous victims he eliminated in his rise to power. However, this bloodthirsty streak was only used at the time of his rise to power, not during his reign as emperor, leaving the common people and even the middle classes with the memory of a moderate and benevolent princeps. Indeed, starting with the victory at Actium, feeling politically secure and sensing the need to build a solid base of consensus that could unite all social classes and the major parties, Octavian began to combine (covert) repression

with greater leniency toward his adversaries or critics, unless they were actually offensive. **Facilitation-Realization-Management**

- ➔ Although the young Caesar had always tended to be calm and cold, on one occasion he showed that even he could be guided by strong emotions, namely his divorce from Scribonia and his marriage to Livia. While it's true that his estrangement from Scribonia (who was the only woman to bear him a child) was inevitable given the impending conflict with his uncle Sextus Pompeius, his marriage to Livia was not without strong criticism from Roman society: Livia was already married (and Octavian forced the divorce), and more importantly, she was six months pregnant, making it completely scandalous for her to be married under those conditions. Octavian's love for her, however, was clearly too strong, and their union would always remain solid and vital to the empire. **Engagement-Understanding**
- ➔ Octavian's understanding of the masses was one of his finest qualities and played a key role in maintaining his popularity among the plebs. From the very beginning of his career, the Son of God placed the consensus and support of the people as one of his main strengths, thanks to his acquired surname and name. Caesar was a man of the people (symbolically, he was also a patrician), and Octavian presented himself as such. Throughout the various crises that beset his years of civil wars and government, he was always able to perceive and allay the populace's discontent and address their concerns and needs. And to do so, he did not rely solely on agents, officials, or collaborators; as already mentioned, both in his public walks and in his judicial hearings, Augustus was constantly in contact with the people. **Perception-Realization-Facilitation**
- ➔ In particular, the young Octavian was always skilled in perceiving and exploiting the fear of others, and he did so on several occasions to obtain a favorable position: in allying himself with a Cicero fearful of the power of Anthony, in inflating the sense of pride and fear (but also pride) of Roman civilization towards the East in general, in the last meeting with a desperate Cleopatra in Alexandria etc **Perception-Realization-Facilitation**

ADVERSITY CAPACITY

- ➔ Beyond specific episodes, Octavian's life was filled with grief, exceptionally so even considering the context of antiquity. He lost his father at four, his grandmother at twelve, his stepfather at sixteen, his mother at nineteen, his adoptive father at eighteen. He also lost a nephew, two grandsons, a son-in-law (and best friend), his other best friend (Maecenas), his sister, a stepson and even a son (Livia gave birth to an already dead child). He was also betrayed by his only daughter and forced to banish two other grandchildren. The only family members to survive him were his beloved Livia and the unappreciated Tiberius. Augustus always bore these losses and sorrows with fortitude, and nothing transpired in his continued work. **Mental Fortitude**
- ➔ The discipline instilled in him in childhood by Atia had an impact on his entire life. Octavian, like Caesar, despised luxury and ostentation (his palace was decidedly modest

compared to those of his immediate successors) and avoided excess. He ate a simple diet (which perhaps allowed him to live so long despite his health's frailty) and maintained a very disciplined routine. The only thing he seemed to lack in moderation was lust. **Discipline**

MANIPULATION

- ➔ It is unclear to what extent the distance between Cleopatra and Antony grew after the defeat at Actium. Sources differ on this point (and we have to remember that they were buried together in their mausoleum), although almost all agree that Cleopatra actually attempted to independently approach Octavian. According to Suetonius, the general's suicide was caused by the queen herself, who spread the false news of his death, convinced by Octavian that this would spare her and her kingdom. While we have no certainty that this is true—indeed, it is an unlikely reconstruction—the young Caesar was undoubtedly skilled in keeping alive, but indefinite, relations and possible promises to Cleopatra after the Battle of Actium, with the aim of capturing her alive. **Direct-Emotional**

DECEPTION

- ➔ In building his empire, Octavian did not limit himself to simply annexing conquered territories (Egypt, Asturias, Cilicia, Noricum, Germany and Illyricum), but, especially in certain complex areas, he employed client kings, local puppet rulers who answered to him and whose territories were under Roman military and administrative control. This approach greatly aided his control of the areas, which were made less turbulent by the presence of local symbolic figures, and helped him avoid appearing as an unjust conqueror in the eyes of the Romans, for whom the concept of "rightful war" was very important. Client kingdoms subjected to Octavian included Judea, Armenia, Mauretania, Cappadocia, and Thrace. Even the Ethiopian Empire fell under the influence of Rome. **Sophistry**

PLANNING

- ➔ I will limit myself here to summarizing the most important plans executed by Octavian. a| First part of the plan to reconquer absolute power belonging to Julius Caesar (from 44 BC to 42 BC) b| Plan to eliminate Mark Antony (from 38 BC to 32 BC) c| Plan to eliminate Lepidus (parallel to the war with Sextus Pompeius) d| Propaganda plan designed to legitimize the empire (follows the political movements from the Battle of Actium to 23 BC). Added to these are a series of minor plans in the military, political, administrative and propagandistic fields.

REASONING

- ➔ Observing and realizing that the Roman people had been too tired in the last century of civil war, Octavian understood that although his starting faction (the *populares*) was generally more progressive in the cultural field with a rapprochement with the Hellenistic world (as Caesar and Antony had been), it was more useful to resume and protect the ancient Italic-Roman values on which Roman civilization was based, in order to deliver a greater and strengthened identity that could stand comparison with the great political transformation of the Principate. **Inductive**
- ➔ Octavian was able to waive certain military objectives that could have been important to his expansionist plans. First and foremost, the Parthian Kingdom, Caesar's ultimate dream and the necessary path to achieving the glory of Alexander the Great, a widespread trope among all Roman generations from the time of Pompey to that of Septimius Severus. Ironically, Parthia would have been the site of Octavian's first great military campaign had Caesar not died, since he intended to appoint him commander of the cavalry alongside Lepidus. However, given the numerous theaters of war already open and, above all, realizing that Rome would find it excessively difficult and costly to maintain the occupation of a distant and rich territory like Persia (having just annexed Egypt), he decided to maintain the status quo imposed by Mark Antony's two eastern campaigns, limiting himself to tasking Tiberius with bringing Armenia, conquered by force and maintained by the diplomatic skill of Augustus himself, under his control. Likewise, Britain, another place of interest to Caesar, had been coveted for a long time, but it had been decided that it was too poor compared to Germany, the territory on which he instead wanted to focus more. **Deductive-Abductive**

AUGUSTS IN NUMBERS

- **6** won wars in which he participated as a military commander
- **13** wars won, counting the ones he supervisioned but not personally leaded, all of them successful
- **6** battles where he directly commanded, 5 of which he won
- **~1 million** km^2 annexed to Rome's territory under his rule, the greatest expansion ever made by a single man in Rome's history
- **10** new provinces created
- **6** provinces reorganized
- **8** fields heavily reformed by him across the years (military, administration, religion, finance, government, justice, culture and urbanistic)
- **4** great historic figures outsmarted/killed (Cicero, Sextus Pompey, Cleopatra and Antony)
- **300+** senators killed, the highest amount in History
- **2** consuls killed, record that is second only to Hannibal's one and the highest in History if we consider them as direct murders
- **5** main conspiracies foiled
- **8** conspiracies foiled overall
- **45** years of rule over Rome, the longest reign the Empire will ever see
- **7** heirs he buried before his death
- **50,000** miles of roads built under his reign
- **4,6 trillions** dollars, the estimation of his heritage including the prince's treasure